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318

JOHN HYDE DE FOREST, 1844 - 1911

MISSIONARY, STATESMAN, CHRISTIAN
AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN

"I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations."

Jeremiah 1: 5.



By the REV. SIDNEY L. GULICK, D.D.

CONTENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DAILY BIBLE STUDY

- | | | |
|------|--|----|
| I. | The Missionary in Embryo | 3 |
| | A Prophet unto the Nations, Jeremiah 1:
4-10. | |
| II. | Early Days in Japan | 6 |
| | Putting on the Panoply, Ephesians 6: 10-19. | |
| III. | A Preaching Missionary | 10 |
| | Setting forth the Unknown God, Acts 17:
22-34. | |
| IV. | Furlough and Readjustment | 14 |
| | Pressing on in the High Calling, Philippians
3: 1-16. | |
| V. | The Foreign Missionary | 19 |
| | Becoming All Things to all Men, I Corin-
thians 9: 16-27. | |
| VI. | The Expanding Message | 23 |
| | A Prayer for Dynamic Growth, Ephesians
1: 15-23. | |
| VII. | The Crowning Service | 26 |
| | The Enlarging Kingdom, Ezekiel 47: 1-12. | |

JOHN HYDE DEFOREST

I. THE MISSIONARY IN EMBRYO¹

The young teacher was early at his desk in the little country schoolhouse that wintry morning. It was not so much that he had the day's work to prepare, as that he was wondering how to meet his boys. He knew how they had put out his predecessor; and now he had heard that they were going to put him out, too! Yes, and put him out they could, for he was only sixteen, and rather short at that; whereas some of his twenty pupils were older and larger far than he. He did not claim to be a thoroughly equipped teacher, but at least he knew more than his pupils did; and self-respect, as well as the exigencies of self-support, demanded resistance to the rumored intentions of his scholars.

As he sat thinking the door opened and the largest boy in school walked in. He laid down his books and began shaking the snow from his coat. The teacher looked on for a moment, then took the bull by the horns:

"Jim, do you know, they say the fellows are going to put me out."

¹ This sketch of the life and work of John Hyde DeForest consists chiefly of quotations from Dr. DeForest's own letters as given in "The Evolution of a Missionary." This charming biography of her father, by Charlotte B. DeForest, should be read and pondered by those who would understand in some adequate way the work of missions in the Orient. Thanks are due the Fleming H. Revell Company for permitting the use of the material quoted herein.

Jim flicked off another batch of snow and slowly stretched himself until his full height blocked the doorway.

“They’ll have to walk over my dead body first,” he said, and the teacher knew that the day was won.

John DeForest had the usual grit and more than the usual wit of the New Englander. Ever ready to learn, he possessed quick and broad sympathies. These characteristics were vital factors in his missionary life.

Born (1844) of New England parents, his father one of those “truly good and faithful pastors” that have been the making of New England, John had the privilege of public school and of attendance at Phillips Academy, interspersed, in his later years, with periods of teaching. For nine months, between academy and college, he served in the Union Army, which deepened his moral and religious life.

Unexpected financial aid enabled him to continue in his college work without a break. In the seminary, he was able not only to pay expenses, but to pay off debts, and graduated with “several hundred dollars in the bank.”

As a scholar he was above the average, graduating with Phi Beta Kappa rank, but he was not brilliant. He evinced no unusual aptitude for languages; science and mathematics made but an ordinary appeal to him. History, philosophy and literature seem to have been his favorite branches. He had, however, at times an original way of looking at things and of stating them that made the friends that knew him best expect from him a more than ordinary career.

One of them later wrote of him: “He was a muscular oarsman, a genial companion, an obliging librarian, a far from sedate theological student, who preached

every Sunday after he was licensed and nobody knows how many times before.”

“As to how I came to be a minister at all,” he once wrote a daughter, “that’s a rather long story. It took shape on a transport off Cape Hatteras one night during the war, when I walked the deck till after midnight and told the Lord I’d serve Him as a minister, if He’d bring me through the war in safety. It was a rather cowardly feeling mixed with a sense of utter weakness that led me to that decision. The next night a tremendous storm arose and we barely pulled through the peril. I felt glad then that I had made my decision.

“In college I felt bound by my vow—otherwise I fancy I’d have broken off. For I got into a rather worldly spirit and was offered one or two good places as teacher. But I went right on,—though some of the fellows thought it very queer I was going to be a minister. One time in senior year a pile of us were gabbing together and I was asked what I was going to be and replied, ‘A minister.’ ‘The devil you are!’ said one of my classmates in surprise. That rather stumped me. If it appeared to others that I was so totally unfit for the ministry, I began to think I had better give it up. So I took Joe Greene aside and asked him as my best friend to tell me frankly if I seemed so unfit. He comforted me with very emphatic assertions that ‘the ministry needs just such fellows as you,’ and so I kept on.”

Accepting the pastorate of the Congregational Church at Mt. Carmel, Conn., he was ordained in 1871 and shortly thereafter married. But short-lived joy ran its course; in the spring the young wife and her new-born babe were laid to rest in the neighbor-

ing churchyard. In the ensuing struggle with his grief, with his pulpit and even with his faith, he was laid low by a malarial fever; at this dire moment despair of his chosen life-work had well-nigh conquered but for his loving people and the tonic power of nature. Weeks of tramping and trouting in the woods of Maine drove out the fever, brought balm to sorrow and renewed the iron of courage in his blood.

Returning to his pastorate, he was richly blessed in the winter of 1873-1874 by a season of fruit-bearing revival. This was the sign for which he had been waiting as the call of the Lord for foreign service. Not many months passed before his church gladly bade him Godspeed to the land then just opening its doors after centuries of seclusion.

The joy of his appointment to Japan by the American Board was doubled by the fact that it was not for himself alone. He was married in September, 1874, to Miss Sarah E. Starr, and sailed from San Francisco in a side-wheeled steamer that without stopping at Hawaii took twenty-seven days in crossing to Yokohama.

II. EARLY DAYS IN JAPAN

“Oh, I wish I could tell you of my visit to Yedo [Tokyo], the great city of this empire. . . . We had two of the best guides in the empire: Rev. Mr. Ballagh, Dutch Reformed, took us on Monday, and Dr. Veeder, one of the teachers in the ‘Great College,’ on Tuesday. . . . I can only tell you of one incident. We went to a tremendous temple [Asakusa]; its gateway was as large as the Mount Carmel Church, and we went between two hideous images, high and

large, the guardians of the temple. The people that are sore-footed stop and worship these giant creatures by hanging their shoes before them and leaving them there as an offering. You often hear people say, 'I'd give all my old shoes if so-and-so could happen.' Well, the heathen really do it. I saw I should think forty pairs hung up for the old guardian gods to smell of. We kept ours on."

Further quotations from his letters of different dates picture for us his first impressions and experiences. "I laugh day and night to see these comical Japs. . . . One can hardly move a block in any of the cities without being addressed in this double-twisted, back-handed, excruciatingly polite and non-understandable language by some of the half-dressed natives who would be most happy to become one's horse for a slight consideration; and the only word a newcomer is sure of is the everlasting 'jinrikisha'! It is a large baby-cart, capable of carrying one or two full-grown persons or six babies as they average. . . . Very undignified accidents sometimes happen to those who ride. The Japanese are a marvelously polite people; when they bow, their heads go down to the level of their knees; and it is not uncommon to see three such sweeping bows for a single salutation. One such bow divided up would last some Americans a year. Now, bowing on one's feet is a comparatively safe thing; but bad luck to him who rides regardless of the equilibrium of things! The other day while walking out, I saw a Japanese friend riding towards me. He braced himself to do me the usual honor. His little coolie of course did not suspect that an additional weight would be suddenly thrown on the shafts; and when the rider smilingly bent forward to the showing of his

back hair, down went the shafts, my friend went head-long from the jinrikisha taking his astonished horse right between the shoulders, and both together measured full length in the road. . . . I did try to be a good missionary and tell him how sorry I was,—while I was aching to have him hurry away round the corner out of sight; and then I laughed the longest laugh on record—it was three-quarters of a mile long.

“Japan is a progressive nation. Let any one spend an hour on the history of this people, reading the dark times of Ieyasu three hundred years ago, or let him talk with an intelligent samurai of advanced years concerning the heartless and barbarous things he himself has shared in or known of; and then see how united, quiet, safe the country now is: the sword laid aside, manufactures encouraged, schools multiplied, education exalted and persecution abandoned; and he will see the word ‘progressive’ belongs to Japan as it does to no other nation on earth. And this desire to be progressive, which led her to introduce steamboats, railroads, telegraphs, etc., has also led to the adoption of Sunday, not at all because it is Resurrection Day, but because she desires to accept as rapidly as is practicable the customs and also the laws, as well as the wonderful inventions, of the most civilized nations.

“I have just taught my class in Sunday school, and in teaching these heathen fellows some very amusing things often happen. Dr. Gordon, for example, was telling his scholars once how the devil tempted Christ, and one of them replied, ‘The devil must have been exceedingly impolite to tempt so good a man as Jesus.’

“There is nothing the Japanese need so much as grit. One of the great evils we have to contend with in Osaka is this abominable weakness of doing evil be-

cause others do it, or, rather, because it is the standing, recognized custom of the land.

“The work is just what I like, only I am not fit to be a missionary. I never knew while in America how much of evil was in my nature, until a new line of difficulties arose out here to try my patience and love. To be repeatedly cheated out of little sums, to baptize persons and then find them committing gross sins, to lend money and have the borrower talking evil of you, to have the most fault found by those whom you love the most—these are some of the trials of work here. But to see these liars becoming truthful and ashamed of a lie, to have free and easy young men shake off their old companions, to see them suffer being disowned for Jesus’ sake, to see them refuse government employ and take a bare living to work for Christ—these and numberless things that I can’t tell on paper are our joy.”

Through those early years there was much to learn. It was not only the language, though that was hard enough. More difficult still was adequate understanding of the mental characteristics of the people and the discovery of effective methods of missionary work. The problems of church organization, of finding the best methods of presenting Christian truths, of promoting self-reliance and self-support on the part of the young churches—those were the questions that occupied the young missionary. Throughout his life, Dr. DeForest was studying these problems, and the success of the Japan Mission of the American Board was in no small part due to his fertile suggestions and unwearied patience in these matters, never satisfied with the past, but ever pressing on.

III. A PREACHING MISSIONARY

For fully five years Dr. DeForest devoted himself almost exclusively to the language. He refused innumerable invitations to preach, because he was unwilling to deliver the gospel message in verbally and grammatically mangled form. The result justified his delay. In later years he was recognized as a master of the spoken language; he became a leader among the missionaries of all the societies and was always sought after for important public occasions. The following quotations from his letters give vivid impressions of his early experiences as a "touring missionary."

"Last year my particular work was evening talks in the houses of those people who wanted to hear a foreigner tell about the religion of Jesus. I went night after night to different places and always received the very best attention. We all sit on the floor around two or three *hibachi*, 'fire-bowls,' for you know they don't use chairs or stoves here. Everybody feels chatty, so there are no embarrassing breaks in the conversation. The little teakettle is on the fire-bowl and the tiny teacups on a tray. After a pleasant half-hour of news-talking, we each take a Gospel and read a verse around, have it fully explained by them if they can explain it, and where they fail I correct, telling apt stories and Western customs to make them interested. We sing, too, though perhaps you might be in doubt were you to hear us. But as the Japanese seldom sing except in connection with bad women and wine,¹ they make queer work at it. Many cultured Japanese at first won't go to our churches because we

¹ A condition that could not long survive the introduction of music into the public schools, and the spread of Christianity.

sing. They think it a shame to sing unless it is in a bad house. But we say that God made us with glad voices and we should use them in praising and thanking Him; and so we insist on our music. Seventeen cats by night are no comparison once in a while, but gradually they are learning to sing after our style. We pray, too, and you might think their way of getting at it quite funny; but I am used to it. The leader of the meeting will say, 'Hidezo, you please pray.' He laughs and says: 'Really, I'm mighty awkward at praying; you'd better excuse me.' 'Oh, no, you can do it first-rate; try it once.' 'All right, then, I'll give it a trial.' And while they all smile and giggle, Hidezo begins and prays. When he gets through, one and another will say, 'Oh, you did excellently.' '*You* can pray first-rate.' 'Indeed, that's a wonderful prayer.' Then if it be a rich man's house, he orders in a tiny dish of little cakes and candies with the tea, and the Bible stories are freely talked over with any other stories that may chance to get into their minds. The soft mats we sit on, the warm charcoal fires and the perfectly clean rooms enclosed with paper doors, make a very cozy place for little social studies of the Bible and of the people, too. When it comes on towards ten o'clock, I start to go; at which they all bow clear down to the floor; I, doing likewise, start for the door. One politely hands me my shoes or coat, and with repeated good-night we go home. My fat companion, Dr. Takagi, who last winter always went with me to help on the good work, was with me one night when we both got into one jinrikisha to ride home. But the fat man and I are a big load for one man to haul, and hitting the curbstone on the start, over we went backwards, carrying the coolie right off his feet up into the

air. There we stayed for a few moments, feet pointing to the stars, and we wedged in so tight that we couldn't even roll out. However, I managed to turn a somersault and so got out, the fat doctor rolling after me. Wish I could draw a picture of it!—Well, last winter I spent my strength in that kind of work; and besides doing good to those who heard, I learned a great deal about the inside customs, so that I feel far more confidence in preaching than I ever did before.”

In the eighth decade of the last century, theater preaching became popular. Dr. DeForest describes one of these in a letter for American Sunday schools, addressed to “My Dear Four Hundred Thousand Christian Friends”; from this letter I take a few sentences.

“Now shall I tell you about the speakers and what they said? How many of you could sit through twenty sermons? I almost see you squirming now and wondering when this letter will end. But when such splendid fellows—myself excepted—speak, you can't help but listen. There was *Neesima*, a name widely known and loved in America. . . . ‘Why is it,’ said a Christian to me one day, ‘why it is that when *Neesima* speaks we are always affected?’ His name is already a tower of strength in Japan. *Sawayama* is another name familiar to the churches in America. We almost dreaded to have him speak, for he is not strong, except in faith. . . . *Dr. Gordon* was another speaker, and his subject was Buddhism. He has studied this religion and found some very queer errors. That a foreigner should teach them the historic facts that they never before had heard of, made one of the most entertaining speeches of the day.

The people laughed at their ignorance; but the priests were very uncomfortable.

“But I cannot tell you a tithe of the good things. The speeches went on and on till well-nigh midnight. When my name was called, as I stepped forward, the chairman whispered, ‘They are quite tired with serious talking; please make them laugh a little to rest them.’ A queer request indeed to make of a sober missionary! But as my subject was, ‘How to Regulate a Family,’ there was ample room for cheerful talk. ‘You hardly know,’ said I, ‘how strange it seemed to me when I first came to Japan, to see your family customs. When a young man wants a wife, he has her come to his father’s home to be his slave and the servant of his father and mother. Your celebrated book on “The Great Learning of Woman” begins with this sentence: “A bride must serve her father-in-law and her mother-in-law.” Now if that is so, the poor thing has three masters. Really, is not that too bad? You yourselves have a proverb that “many captains wreck the ship.” And no wonder so many marriages are little else than wrecks when the wife has to live at the bidding of three lords. Now long before Confucius’ day our religion knew the cure for this state of things. In the opening verses of our Bible we read that when a man takes a wife, “he shall *leave* his father and mother.” Really, I never thought of this while living in America, but when I came to Japan and saw how you do it—I don’t mean you who are here tonight, for that would be very impolite, but I guess some of your friends do it—I knew then the wisdom that of old has ordered that fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law shall keep out of the children’s families. There is no more fruitful source of family quarrels and unfaithfulness than is

found in the Confucian doctrine—adopted by Buddhism—that a bride is the servant of her husband’s parents.’ And so I went on, ending thus: ‘You have a land filled with beautiful scenery. . . . But remember this: there is no more beautiful sight under all the wide heavens than one family dwelling under one roof in love.’ . . . The next day, Sunday, was a thanksgiving day in the three little churches. . . . How the priests are stirred up! But, as of old, the enemies of Christianity are doing more to make it known than all the believers can possibly do.”

Some years later, after one of his tours, we find him describing it in the following terms:

“What a life touring is! I’ve been out now about two weeks and have two more. Night after night I am at it with audiences until twelve o’clock. Then I swap off and have an afternoon meeting, hoping to rest early in the evening, but a caller prevents. I have rice and raw eggs sometimes three times a day; but last night I had a chicken stew on my *hibachi* and managed to put away four bowls of rice, too. And as Mamma sent me a box of cocoa, I topped off with some of that and stale crackers. But the audiences are so nice that I really enjoy my food; and I feel that God is using me to help bring the great East and the powerful West together in a brotherhood founded in one deep faith.”

IV. FURLOUGH AND READJUSTMENT

For a wide-awake, growing missionary, a return to his native land for a period of rest and recuperation is often a turning point in life. It brings new insights and gives new perspectives. The work in the mission field is reviewed as a whole. One’s native land also

is studied, appreciated and criticised with keener mind and larger standards. Dr. DeForest profited much by his furloughs and grew into larger manhood, his work becoming thereby ever more fruitful.

Dr. DeForest's second period in Japan was occupied first for a brief time with wide preaching and later with strenuous educational work in the northern city of Sendai. From this period I select only part of one letter because of its special significance for Yale men. It was his custom for years to write annually to the Seminary. Speaking of this letter, he gives a glimpse of himself.

“Have spent three mornings writing a letter to Yale Seminary, and have enjoyed it. Have learned a new trick—to write down in a notebook all matters that I don't understand, to be looked up on my return home. I have been slovenly in my reading and studying, sliding over things that I didn't understand. Now on this new year I mean to turn over a new leaf and study hard things. It's a shame to rest content in the belief that we have the truth and so needn't trouble our brains about philosophies. I must know more of the science of man and of mind, and the laws of true reasoning, and not content myself with a quibble.”

“This year begins with a new intellectual life for me. Being led by the pamphlet size of McCosh's ‘Philosophical Series’ to carry one or two on my trips, for the first time in my life I have become interested in metaphysics. Now I eagerly read Porter's ‘Human Intellect,’ which has always seemed an elephant to me; I delight in Hopkins' ‘Outline Study of Man’ and have planned to spend now as many years as are necessary to learn the science of man—though Froude says there can't be any. I plan hereafter to task my mind

in some definite study or studies and to progress, instead of resting under the fatal idea that I am getting old and past my prime. With God's help I am nowhere near my prime. The laws of logic must be mastered, the great idea of evolution and the statements of materialistic scientists must be learned at first hand. It is a shame to have drifted forty-two years. The next thirty shall be progress. I will know the best thoughts of the best minds. Kant, Locke and other great dead shall be my teachers, as well as the great living. The growth of political economy, the great socialistic problems, the history of my own language, etc., etc., shall be inquired into."

"Koriyama, Japan, Jan. 18, 1886.

"MY DEAR MR. MORSE AND OTHER FRIENDS
IN YALE SEMINARY:

"Your pleasant letter asking me to write you with reference to my every-day life here was duly received, and I thank you for the invitation. Before replying, however, let me frankly scold you for sending me only an invitation to write you. Knowing that I am a Yale man, why didn't you follow the Golden Rule and fill up the rest of that small sheet of paper with some of the gossip of the seminary? . . .

"But, forgetting the things that are behind, let me give you an idea of my life in connection with the present condition of Young Japan. I am spending this month twenty-five miles from my home in Osaka, in the castle-city of Koriyama. The old castle lies just west of the city. . . . Its imposing walls are tumbling down and its moats are filling up. . . . In the center [of the grounds], as if to mark conspicu-

ously the great reformation that is transforming Japan, stands the academy of the province, with its faculty of eleven teachers and its one hundred and fifty advanced scholars; while in the city of only ten thousand inhabitants are four large common schools, with some eight hundred scholars and with scores of teachers. . . .

“You cannot visit one of these schools without being impressed with the fact that Japan is intensely earnest in the study of modern sciences, and that through the English language. You have doubtless heard that after canvassing the merits of the various languages of Western nations, Japan has at last formally adopted English as the one to be taught in her schools and used as widely as possible in her public offices. I regard this as a most providential step in Christianizing this empire. The English language is saturated with Christian thought. Peter Parley never could have had the remotest idea that his simple ‘Universal History’ would be one of the means of spreading the Jesus Way in this far-off nation with its ‘eight hundred thousand gods.’ Yet a physician, recently baptized here, said to me the other day: ‘The reason my friend the lawyer doesn’t become a Christian is because he doesn’t know history. If he could read Parley, he would have something to build on.’ To be sure, this was his way of modestly telling me that he himself had read Parley, but yet it must be confessed that Parley is one of our active missionaries. Some two months ago, while spending a night a hundred miles from here in a hotel, two or three of us were talking together about Christianity. Now a Japanese hotel is simply a great hall divided into little rooms by paper slides, so that no room can be fastened, and each one opens into every adjoining room and privacy is utterly out of the ques-

tion. Conversation is heard as easily by the neighbors as by the one to whom you are talking. So of course our words were heard by the young fellow who had the adjoining room, and wanting to see as well as to hear, he pushed aside his paper door and, bowing clear to the floor, politely begged the privilege of sitting on the edge of our room and listening to the talk. We invited him to come right into our circle where he could warm his hands over our fire-bowl, and in the course of the talk he asked me the difference between *Lord* and *God*. I found he had learned the words from Parley's history.

“And now, in closing, let me ask you a question: Why don't more of you Yale Seminary men come out and help us strike heavy blows in the empires of the East? If a dozen of your graduating class should come out here, the pressure on the churches at home to fill your places would be an unqualified blessing, and the United States would suffer no more loss than when she gave those first men seventy-five years ago. Ten or twelve of you *now*—a band of Yale men—could leave a stream of blessings here that would swell to mighty rivers of influence in generations to come. Come, and you shall have all the trials and tribulations you can stand and all the joy and glory that come through suffering for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. You each, if you want it, can have exclusive right to a parish of half a million; and you will have the supreme indifference of your entire parish till you win by your politeness and love and brain-power your right to have your say. Come, do come, and it is by no means improbable that it will be yours to witness a more powerful religious movement than has yet been recorded among the victories of Him

to whom every knee shall bow. But another thought comes over me of late—a most gloomy one—that unless you or some others do come quickly and throw your very lives into showing the blessings that Christ only can give, this nation, after having advanced to where the promised land of peace and joy and love is in full sight, may drop back into a long night of atheistic philosophy. . . . Why don't you come?

“Sincerely yours,

“J. H. DEFOREST.”

V. THE FOREIGN MISSIONARY

Dr. DeForest returned alone from his second furlough, leaving his wife and four children in America. It was a period of intense loneliness and discouragement; he later confessed that he could hardly have returned alone had he realized what the experience was to bring.

As the years passed and acquaintance with Japan deepened, Dr. DeForest was increasingly impressed with the noble qualities of the nation. This growing appreciation brought many changes of emphasis in his conversations, sermons, lectures and writings.

“Once on a railroad journey,” his daughter writes, “in conversation with an educated stranger, the subject turned to the then absorbing topic of the ‘text-book scandal,’ when many prominent educators throughout the land were convicted of receiving bribes from publishers of school books. The stranger expressed his sense of shame that a foreigner should know of so disgraceful an occurrence. My father replied that shame for what had been in the past was

not so vital as the question whether Japan had sufficient moral power to prevent the recurrence of similar scandals in future. This led the conversation to the great basis of morality in the teachings of Christ. The man later followed up the conversation by a study of Christianity and became a Christian.

“A favorite historical incident used by my father in his sermons was the self-sacrifice of Sakura Sogoro, the head man of a village in the province of Shimoso, who was crucified in the first half of the seventeenth century as the result of his righteous attempt to deliver his village from the cruel oppression of an overlord. A strong Christian pastor in Tokyo today, formerly a Buddhist priest, traces part of his first interest in Christianity to an address on the principle of self-sacrifice, in which my father used this incident to lead up to the world’s supreme example of life-giving for others.

“In his general attitude towards the Japanese he was, as one of his fellow missionaries termed him, an ‘advocate’ rather than a ‘judge.’ His place and work did not require him to be the latter, but often did call on him for the offices of the former. He was not blind to the faults of the Japanese; but in making his moral estimates he made liberal allowance for misunderstandings that might arise from differences of custom and language. He said, ‘What sad, heavy, discouraging days and nights every missionary of experience has suffered! How near to wreckage some great Christian works have gone because of racial differences, because the Japanese terms of *righteousness*, *justice*, *virtue*, *chastity*, *honor*, *love*, *worship*, have shades of meaning that we are strangers to!’ He was particularly on his guard against the danger of letting

himself become suspicious or unsympathetic. 'That,' he said, 'is the saddest thing that can happen. It dries up our love and makes it formal; it quenches the Holy Spirit, who would otherwise give us the victory.'

"One thing that helped him to avoid sweeping generalizations about bad Japanese characteristics and that prevented him from attributing to the whole nation the faults of some classes or individuals was his study of their history and his understanding of the way sections or strata of the nation had been differently influenced by varying environment and training. He also distinguished between those failings that are common to human beings everywhere and those that seem locally emphasized. In his own mature judgment, the greatest fault in Japanese character was the weakness of the individual to act in new lines. When asked by one of the commissions preparatory to the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 to state any special conditions or influences antagonistic to the spread of the Gospel in Japan, he made among others the following statement: 'Those parts of Christian civilization that fit the national characteristics so that the whole nation can join in or agree with them,—like the Red Cross Society, the humane spirit in philanthropic work, the growing value of the individual, universal education, better moral living,—are welcomed everywhere. But the power of the Gospel for every individual, compelling each deliberately to choose life or death, does not appeal to individuals widely. They love to act *en masse* and are powerful in this line. The individual initiative is weak. I have heard some of their own Christian leaders lament this as the one great defect in Japanese character.'

"Of the good qualities of the Japanese, on the other

hand, there were many of which he loved to speak, and which he found of inestimable help in his work as a Christian missionary. Chief among these were loyalty, open-mindedness, and love of righteousness.

“For the Japanese press he wrote extensively. He produced no great work, but he wrote to meet definite situations, and to the timeliness of many of his tracts was due their success. He drew his subjects from the thought and the movements of the Japanese, as he touched them in his Christian work: when he found from the reception of a talk that it had struck a vibrant chord in his hearers, he gave it the wider voice of the printed page. Some of his subjects, he said, he would not have thought of taking, but for the suggestions of the evangelists with whom he was working who knew so well what lines of thought would touch a popular audience and open the door for the presentation of Christian truth.

“An additional link with Yale came when the university conferred upon him in 1889 the degree of Doctor of Divinity, in recognition—to quote the official notification—‘of your success in the difficult field to which you have been called, and thus to remind you that faithful labor in such a field, however distant, is eagerly followed and warmly appreciated by those who care for the interests of Christian learning here.’ His pleasure in this unexpected sign of appreciation was sincere, for he felt that it honored the cause to which he had given his life; but it humbled him with a sense of his own unfitness and the belief that Yale had other men in the same fields of labor more worthy of it than he. ‘I have no idea how it happened to strike me—this Yale lightning,’ he wrote his mother. ‘Every day a laugh goes up over me—it is so funny. The

trouble is, it will never cease to be funny, and I shall have this burden to bring my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave—provided the hair holds out.’ ”

The annual meetings of the Mission were rare occasions of fellowship, cheer and spiritual uplift, to which Dr. DeForest contributed much in every way.

“At the table tonight we had an uproarious time. I told some of my college experiences, and after a while Sydney Gulick remarked, without a smile, ‘You must have been converted since then!’ It added to the fun. I remarked, ‘Just as though once would have been enough!’ Indeed, it really seems as though I had been converted many times. New experiences and a breaking away from old thoughts and lower ideals seem like a new life.”

VI. THE EXPANDING MESSAGE

Dr. DeForest completed his formal education before the evolutionary theories of life and history, the historical criticism of the Bible and the discipline of comparative religion had made any impression on Christian America. Like all the earlier missionaries to Japan, he feared and deprecated the coming of these views which he regarded as destructive, both to religion and to morals. But he valiantly studied the new views that he might know them first-hand. Gradually, as in the case of so many others, he gained changed conceptions of their teachings and significance, deeper understandings of nature, man and God and loftier visions of service. As the years passed, he himself became one of the leaders in Japan in showing how theistic evolution and reverent criticism not only bring no harm to the Christian message, but on

the contrary give it a firmer grip on the great realities of life.

“We may have to change our theory of inspiration. . . . Our fathers modified their ideas of God and the Bible and based their creeds and theologies on their growing knowledge and their larger environments; and their God was all the more a living God to them and their Bible all the better for the enlarged interpretation they reverently made. In like manner our environment has vastly increased, bringing immense treasures of new knowledge, and we should not be true to the spirit of our fathers unless we were ready, in the face of new facts, to change our ideas about God, about the Bible, about the world and about our inherited creeds and theologies.”

“The *a priori* conclusion was,” writes his biographer, “that the guiding hand of God had led the Japanese, like the Israelites, by using their environment and the borrowed or inherited elements of their religion as stepping-stones in the path to Christ. This conclusion, moreover, bore the test of being applied to the history of the Japanese. As his studies of their past, their ideals, their moral teachers, revealed to him more and more the witness to Himself that God had been implanting in the nation during its preparatory centuries, he bowed his head and lifted his heart with a new awe, and a new understanding of the greatness and the glory of his God. No longer did he fear to change his theory of inspiration; he realized now the great constructive service that Biblical criticism was doing for him, and the Bible became more living, more personal, more intimately related to him and the work God had given him to do than before.”

In a sermon addressed to missionaries we find the

following paragraphs: "Friends, the work of converting this gifted nation is peculiarly an intellectual task. Whatever application the words, 'Take no thought what ye shall say,' may have had for certain ones working under despotism, they have no applicability to us working in this land of liberty. To be sure, there is need of the wide work of the Holy Spirit upon this people to convince of sin, to illumine the conscience and to lead to sincere repentance. But there is also need of the Holy Spirit as the God of the intellect upon *us*, who are blessed with conditions of work such as no other body of missionaries ever had and who have an intellectual task of vaster proportions than ever fell to prophets or apostles."

Addressing an American audience on one occasion, he said: "As I look back over the first half of my career, I confess I was not able to meet in a fair and courteous spirit the fierce attacks on Christianity by able men. What did I know about Buddhism and the life of its great founder?—or Confucianism and the mighty moral work it had wrought through long millenniums in the most populous empire on earth? Therefore, I had to study and learn with open mind all the good I could discover in those systems; and this is one of the greatest blessings my life in the East has brought me. I had to see what my own Bible has always taught, but what I had failed to discover—the universality of the light that lighteth every man coming into the world, East or West, and the universality of the Fatherhood of God. Just in proportion as I saw those greatest of blessed doctrines, I rejoiced to find lofty moral and spiritual truths in their religions; for then I began to know that God had always been there, loving them as He does us, but giving them a

different moral and religious education in order that in the fullness of time He might use us who have learned His name of *Father* to carry the glad news to His children of the East, and thus make us co-laborers with Him in binding into one blessed brotherhood the great East and the great West."

"Once on furlough," says his daughter, "he was in conversation with a leader of Christian thought whom he supposed to be familiar with, and friendly to, the viewpoint that recognizes God's hand in the early religious history of every nation. Speaking naturally and non-polemically along this line, he referred to Shaka and Confucius as 'the moral prophets to fit the East for Christ,' and was surprised to have his new acquaintance say, 'All who came before Me were thieves and robbers.' 'Yes,' replied my father, 'Moses, Isaiah, and all the rest!'"

VII. THE CROWNING SERVICE

That for which Japan will longest remember and honor DeForest was his vigorous condemnation of extra-territoriality and his sympathy with her ambitions to recover sovereignty in her own land. For years he stoutly demanded just treatment of the Orient by the Occident and frequently denounced Christendom for its un-Christian attitude to the Asiatic.

Many addresses and articles along these lines won him friendship and high honors in Japan. In 1905 he made a six weeks' tour in Manchuria, just before the close of the war with Russia. He was given letters of introduction from Premier Katsura and other high dignitaries "to all the commanding generals at the front—'except Kuropatkin.'" This tour gave him

rare opportunities to present his gospel message in its most winning form. He spoke many times in camps and hospitals, both in Manchuria and Japan, and many of his addresses were afterwards printed as tracts and widely circulated.

“I found the army in dead earnest over the immense work before them,” he wrote. “They had already fought twenty great battles, every one a grand victory; but there was not a particle of ‘swelled head,’ nor any boasting of power, nor easy talk of future victories. The men were serious. The last battle alone (Mukden) had cost them fifty-seven thousand killed and wounded, and all southern trains, sometimes seventy cars behind one engine, were loaded with the sick and wounded. The hospitals were more than full. . . . There were no drunken feasts, no *geisha* girls, no gambling, no demoralizing loafing after the victories, but ceaseless preparation for the next battle. I heard of instances of looting and violence by a few of the soldiers, but they were so rare that I can only conclude there never was a large army on foreign soil that behaved so well as this Japanese army of half a million men. To be sure, I did not see the real army—that was way above Mukden; but in the rear of an advancing army you can easily hear things if there is anything to be told. And judging from what I saw, . . . I am glad to tell the people of America that the Japanese army is one of the morally cleanest and most orderly that ever existed in war times.

“Here I must mention the universal spirit of kindness towards the Russians. I saw thousands of Russian prisoners, both well and wounded, and I confess it was a revelation to me of the kindness of the Japanese heart to see how they treated these men. . . .

Not even once did I see a contemptuous look towards the captives. On the contrary, I saw officers with kindest of looks unload all their cigarettes and hard-tack on to these prisoners—not officers, mind you, but the ignorant, dirty privates. . . .

“I found ‘hell’—there is no other word for war in some of its aspects. I stood on trenches around Port Arthur where the skulls and limbs and bodies of mingled Japanese and Russians were visible, piled on top of one another in layers. I saw the ‘tiger-traps,’ covered with barbed wire, where men had charged with bayonets, fighting, killing like devils, until the tiger-trap holes were literally filled with corpses. . . . The wounded were left to die, or to be stabbed to death by some barbarian hand. I saw men with eyes shot out, with a jaw shot off, with arms and legs gone, men whose faces were drawn in torture, who would tomorrow be in the morgue. I saw places where villages had been and where now is one extended graveyard. It is as Sherman said, ‘War is hell.’

“But I found heaven also. On that little peninsula called Liaotung, God is working out some of the greatest problems that concern the salvation of the East and that bear upon a far better mutual understanding of the East and the West. In the progress and education of the human race God has used war to deepen the spirit of righteousness, to overthrow wide iniquity and rotten governments, to give liberty to the peoples of the earth. War is one of the terrible things that bring men to their knees in dependence on a righteous God. The sword is not all bad; it is good when ‘bathed in heaven’ and drawn only for righteousness’ sake.

“I think I never had a deeper impression of the

presence of God working for the overthrow of despotism, for the awakening of these Eastern nations, for the essential brotherhood of man, than I had on approaching this little piece of earth, where such vast problems are being solved in floods of blood and pain. We have the blessings we now enjoy because of the sword of our ancestors and the blood they shed. So it is here. Nothing will move the hearts of the Russian people as this useless war, waged in the interests of a despotic government, backed by a despotic Church. Nothing will so arouse the millions of China as the sight of Japan fighting, not only for its own existence, but also for the integrity of China. God is indeed here *shaking the nations*. And out of this struggle is coming liberty for Russia, safety and progress for China, a more rapid extension of Christian thought and life through Japan and a better international law for the world."

After his return to Japan, there was a new note of courage and triumph in his preaching of the coming Kingdom of God. He had seen as never before how God can work through the strife and horror of war to bring about His great designs. Such topics as "Manchuria with God," and "The Fatherhood of God, as Applied to the Society and World of this Age," were among those used by him to bring out the old truths with a new emphasis. "I never felt that I had such a message before," he wrote, "and Japan is now ripe for it."

On a brief visit in the United States in 1908, he wrote his wife: "Last night heard Hobson with astonishment and indignation. Couldn't get to sleep for a while, and had I my materials here, I should have rushed into print against this agitator and

breeder of ill-will. . . . I went to Young Men's Christian Association and have just had a long talk with the secretary that introduced Hobson. I told him that the Young Men's Christian Association is the greatest Christian work in Japan, but when Hobson's speeches under auspices of Young Men's Christian Associations are published in Tokyo, as surely they will be, the stock of the Young Men's Christian Association will fall tremendously in all the East. The secretary was astonished at this international significance and owned he had been troubled over what Hartford would do about it, but hadn't thought of Tokyo. So he's going to write Mott & Co., repudiating the lecture, and ask him to write to Tokyo repudiating it, so as to have that on tap in case the papers there come out. . . . 5 p.m.—My morning's work paid. The secretary comes out in the *Times* disclaiming any responsibility for Hobson's views."

He promptly prepared an "Open Letter to Hobson," the closing paragraph of which summarizes his argument. "For the sake of Japan, whose people I respect and love and whose spirit I believe will bring generous help to the world in the peaceful solution of the greatest of all twentieth century problems—the coming together of the East and the West—I openly affirm that your statements about the war habit of the Japanese and their war designs on our Republic have no better foundation than that furnished by your ignorance of history and of diplomatic usages between governments. And for the sake of the religion which I believe is the greatest force that will bind the race of man, north, south, east and west, in one abiding brotherhood, I must protest against your using Christian platforms and quoting Christian Scripture while

poisoning the minds of your hearers against a people whose friendship the millions of this land prize.”

On returning to Japan, Dr. DeForest was given an ovation, especially in Sendai, which had been his home since 1884. In November, 1908, he was decorated by the Emperor of Japan with the “Fourth Order of the Rising Sun.” In a family letter he tells how the decoration was conferred. “It is to be worn only with swallow-tail and the button only with frock coat. I was ordered to appear at the governor’s office in frock coat, and, to make sure, I wore my tall hat, too. The chief of police was present. He took me before the Imperial Shrine and tried to put the button in my coat; but as it was a new coat, bought just as I left Boston, the show buttonhole had never been cut. So he called for needle and thread and was going into the tailor business, when I drew my knife and soon had a hole big enough for any decoration.”

Late in 1910, after an arduous tour in Korea, followed by a severe attack of angina pectoris, with his customary optimism and courage, he cheerily wrote to the Board: “I’m bowled out of the game for a week or two, after one of the most interesting times of my life—in Korea. A bit of rheumatism has butted into my chest, but I’ll butt him out before long.”

But his optimism did not justify itself. “His five months of invalidism were rich with tokens of love and sympathy from two hemispheres. . . . May 8, at eventide his spirit slipped away into the light.” At sunset the ashes were laid away in the little foreign cemetery adjoining the Japanese Christian burial ground on a hillside on the edge of the city. Around his monument stand trees that are the memorial offering of many a loving heart in different parts of Japan;

while at the gate of the cemetery the Oriental Peace Society has placed its cedar sentinels in his honor. The view looks out on one side upon the mountains where he loved to tramp, on the other upon the broad Pacific over which his thought had so often flown in the yearning to bridge the greater chasm of misunderstanding between the hemispheres.

When Dr. DeForest went to Japan there were barely a score of baptized Christians in all that land. At the time of his death there were about 85,000 Protestant church members, beside some 60,000 Roman and some 25,000 Greek Catholics. The number of missionaries had increased from about fifty to over 700. In 1913 the Protestant Christians of Japan contributed for the support of their churches and workers \$187,269, whereas the gifts of the various mission boards and societies for evangelistic work in Japan, excluding the salaries and personal expenses of missionaries, was \$174,922. The number of self-supporting churches was 182, the number of partly self-supporting churches being 591 in addition. There were in that year 728 ordained native pastors, 713 unordained ministers and workers and 331 Bible women. It is widely believed among Christian pastors that the number of those who accept the teachings of Jesus and seek to conduct their lives in harmony with His spirit is in the vicinity of one million.